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FAMOUS SAWTOOTH RANGE IN IDAHO TO BE KEPT AS PRIMITIVE AREA

The central portion of the picturesque Sawtooth Mountains in central Idaho is to be ~~preserved~~ preserved in its natural state as a large-scale primitive or wilderness area, the Forest Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture announced today. About 200,940 acres in the Boise, Challis, and Sawtooth National Forests, representing some of the most rugged and scenic areas in Idaho, are made a primitive area by administrative order of Chief Forester F. A. Silcox.

Sawtooth Primitive Area has an average elevation of about 8,000 feet, with peaks reaching nearly 11,000 feet. It is rich in big game and small wildlife. Portions of it are clothed in dense stands of pine and spruce, of great value for watershed protection. The Forest Service will develop it for fuller recreational and educational uses by preventing unnatural alteration of wilderness conditions.

It is now in as near a primitive state as is possible in an area of this size in the United States, according to G. B. Mains, Supervisor of the Boise National Forest. It contains no roads, few trails and no human habitations. The Idaho State Planning Board, representing nineteen organizations, and the State Game Department endorsed the plan to create the Primitive Area. The Game Department and the U.S. Forest Service will cooperate in game management to regulate and protect the fine herds of wild animals. Forest Service estimates show that about 1,000 head of elk, 4,000 mule deer, and 650 mountain goats use this portion of the Sawtooth

Mountains for summer range. Portions of the Primitive Area are within a State Game Preserve. Hunting under the state game laws is permitted in other sections. There is unusual variety of furbearers, -- no less than 14 species, including bear, fox, and beaver.

Adjacent to the new Primitive Area are several lakes, also forks of the Payette and Boise Rivers, which are accessible by roads and are being developed by the Forest Service in favored spots for public camp grounds and summer home areas. Roads approach the highlands from several directions but end near the bounds of the Primitive Area. About 750 visitors, including tourists and fishermen, visited the high Sawtooth country last year, most of them entering with pack animals.

The Forest Service will develop a few trails and will give fire prevention and direction of visitors priority during the three summer months when packing trips are practicable. No roads are to be built within the area, however. Besides the 150,000 acres of forest, and smaller expanses of barren and rocky land within the area, there are over 3,000 acres of lake surface and 354 acres of grassland. The skyline of the range consists of sharp granite peaks, hence the name Sawtooth. In keeping with the native grandeur of the Primitive Area, the only buildings to be allowed will be simple log structures needed incidental to maintenance of fire protection, administration, and sanitation, to be built by the Forest Service. When needed, simple rustic overnight shelters, together with small log-fenced pastures for riding and pack animals, may be provided.